QUEBEC CITY

WHEN THE SHOOTER ENTERED THE MOSQUE

Eyewitness accounts, metroNEWS

Vancouver metro

Your essential daily news | WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2017

EMERGENCY DEBATE

Lift 'artificial, arbitrary' cap on Syrian refugees, Mr. Prime Minister

metroNEWS

High 4°C/Low 2°C Sunny!

This Chinese dried goods store is one of the last remaining storefronts of its kind in Vancouver's Chinatown. WANYEE LI/METRO

HERITAGE IN THE HOT SEAT

Concerns over changing face of Chinatown ahead of open house

metroNEWS

Chief housing officer ousted

TERMINATION

City manager says exit due to leadership rift

Matt Kieltyka
Metro | Vancouver

Vancouver's chief housing officer is no longer at the city.

City manager Sadhu Johnston released a statement Tuesday saying that the city "has made a change to how it implements affordable housing and, therefore, has terminated Mukhtar Latif's roles as chief housing officer and CEO of the Vancouver Affordable Housing Agency.

Latif, a housing and development consultant from the U.K. with both public and private-sector experience, was hired in 2013 to be the city's first chief housing officer.

Under his watch, the city pushed ahead with a number of social housing projects, sometimes taking on the full cost when provincial and federal funding was unavailable.

The city's statements credit Latif with getting 1,000 units of affordable housing under development and bringing forward innovative building solutions like modular housing.

"To ensure that housing is co-ordinated and is top of mind for senior leaders within city government, we have also established a Housing Leadership Table, which I chair. Through this venue, all major housing intiatives are vetted and prioritizes to ensure progess is made throughout the organization," Johnston said in the statement. "As part of that transition, Mukhtar Latif … is no longer with the City of Vancouver, nor CEO of VAHA."

VAHA senior planner Luke Harrison has been named interim CEO of the agency.

In his statement, Johnston says VAHA "remains a major delivery agent to get affordable housing on the ground in the city."

At least one opposition city councillor laments the agency's role after Latif's departure.

"I've never been a supporter of VAHA," said Non-Partisan Association Coun. George Affleck. "I felt it was an opaque, bureaucratic structure without any council oversight and no council representation on the board of directors, with millions of dollars of operational costs. I want to dismantle VAHA, take the millions of dollars that are used for administration and put that into housing or lowering taxes to make Vancouver more affordable."

Neither Mayor Gregor Robertson nor city manager Johnston were made available for interview Tuesday.

B.C. Muslims experience uptick in racist incidents following ban

ISLAMOPHOBIA

Lawyers advise abuse victims to call free, support hotline

Jen St. Denis
Metro | Vancouver

The Muslim community in B.C. has experienced a number of racist incidents in the wake of President Donald Trump's executive order that suddenly banned refugees and immigrants from seven majority Muslim countries from entering the United States.

That has included an incident where a woman walking down a Vancouver street had her hijab pulled off, said Hasan Alam, a lawyer involved in setting up an Islamophobia Legal Assistance Hotline (the hotline number is 1-866-730-0728). The hotline provides free and confidential legal advice on immigration, employment and human rights law in several languages.

"There have been people calling in and we know that Islamophobia is happening here in B.C.," Alam said. "It's happening in a multitude of places: universities, classrooms in high schools, on transit."

Alam made the comments during a press conference organized by the B.C. Civil Liberties Association in response to the immigration ban and a subsequent shooting at a Quebec City mosque that left six dead and injured 19.

Crowds gathered in Victoria on Tuesday in a vigil for six people killed at a Mosque in Quebec. THE CANADIAN PRESS/CHAD HIPOLITO

The BCCLA and Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers are also calling on the Canadian government to suspend an existing safe third country agreement between Canada and the United States which prevents refugee claimants from making a claim in Canada if they have travelled to Canada through the U.S., on the grounds that the U.S. is a safe country in which they can make a refugee claim.

That's no longer the case, said Laura Track, a lawyer with the BCCLA.

"Given the rapidly evolving, unpredictable situation in the U.S., the confusion and lack of transparency, uncertain and developing legal challenges — including reports that some border guards are not complying with court orders — Canada cannot consider the United States safe for refugees," Track said. The hotline was set up last year in response to an uptick in racism and discrimination directed at Muslims or people who appear to be Muslim, Alam said.

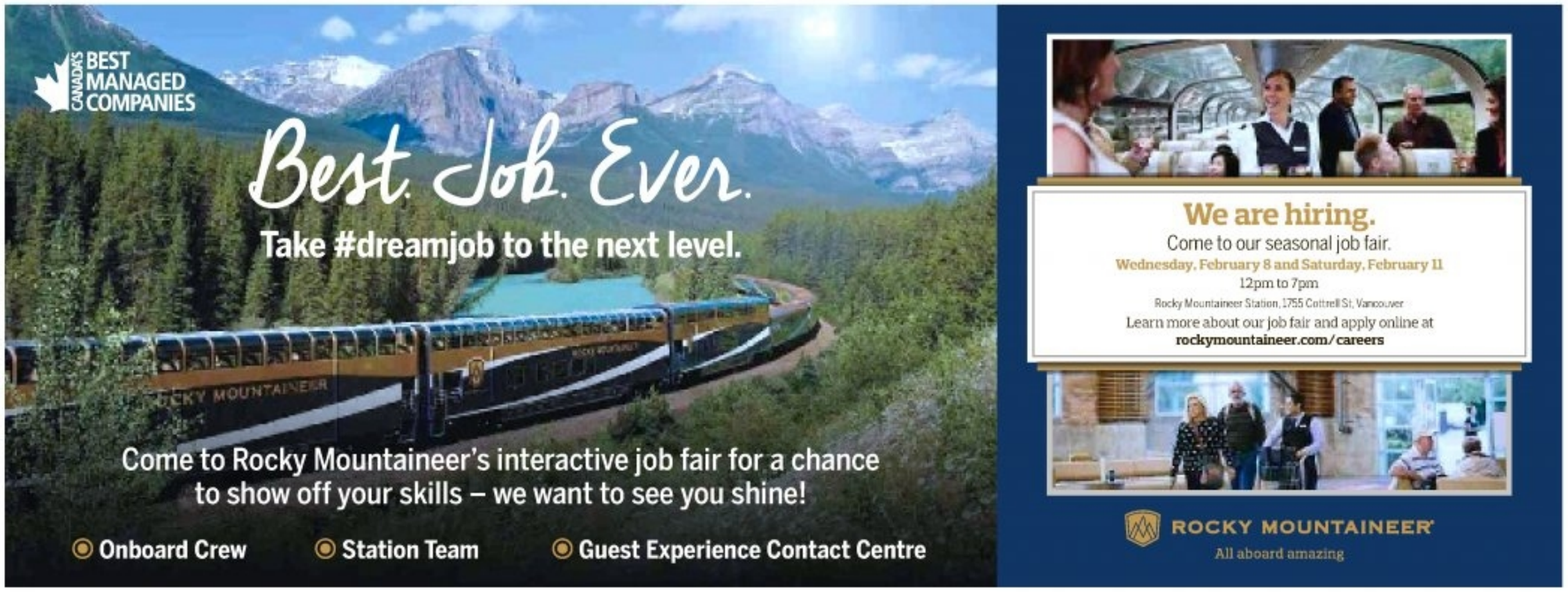
> **Islamophobia is happening in a multitude of places: universities, classrooms in high schools, on transit.**
> Lawyer Hasan Alam

The rhetoric of the last Canadian federal election, in which the former Conservative government sought to ban women from wearing the niqab face covering while taking the citizenship oath and proposed setting up a "Barbaric Practices Hotline," was a factor in the increase, Alam said.

"In the present Canadians are being further exposed to a similar but more extreme form of anti-Muslim and xenophobic rhetoric from the Trump administration in the U.S.," he added. Alam had a warning and a plea for politicians in Canada: what you say matters.

"The public at large takes cue from those who hold power. Sometimes the words politicians say can provide tacit approval for actions," he said.

"We know in the case of the shooter in Quebec that he followed Donald Trump very closely."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Your essential daily news

Donald Trump chooses Neil Gorsuch as his Supreme Court nominee. **World**

Businesses hit with tax spike

ROBSON STREET

West End business group calls for more policy tools

Jen St. Denis
Metro | Vancouver

The northern end of Robson Street, where the Robson Public Market lies, has seen property values skyrocket. JEN ST. DENIS/METRO

Take a good hard look at your favourite coffee shop, the restaurant where you celebrated your anniversary or the corner store you rely on to grab that forgotten carton of milk.

With property values for commercial properties in Business Improvement Areas spiking an average of 40 per cent across Vancouver this year, and in some cases as much as 200 to 300 per cent, their continued survival is very much in jeopardy.

"Typically year by year their increases go up five to 10 per cent," said Paul Sullivan, a principal of the property appraisal firm Burgess Cawley Sullivan. Business Improvement Areas are the commercial areas that anchor many Vancouver neighbourhoods with shops and services. It's the highest one-year move in property values Sullivan has ever seen in his 25-year career.

Hot spots include the Broadway Corridor, Railtown, Chinatown and Mount Pleasant. But no area is hotter than the northern end of Robson Street and the western end of Davie Street. There, a relatively new community plan that increased the density allowed for those sections of the streets has pushed assessments into the stratosphere.

"All the little retailers along lower Robson, their property values have gone up 100 to 300 per cent," Sullivan said. As an example, he said a building that may have been assessed at $12 million in 2016 is now valued at $44 million.

Redevelopment for the area is certainly to be expected with the changes to the community plan, said Stephen Regan, executive director of the West End BIA. But he fears that the pace of property increase means the transition won't be smooth. Many of those business owners — who often pay property taxes directly through their lease — will now have to come up with hundreds of thousands more in revenue to cover the increased taxes.

The risk is that the number of vacant storefronts could increase as business owners leave early or go out of business and buildings await redevelopment, Regan said. Or the shopping areas will become dominated with "safe" tenants, like chain restaurants and banks.

Increasing property values don't always translate for hardship for small businesses, according to Grant McDonald, an assessor with the Vancouver office of BC Assessment. He recently told Vancouver city council that Railtown is still attracting independent small businesses, despite lease rates having doubled.

> **All the little retailers along lower Robson, their property values have gone up 100 to 300 per cent.**
> Paul Sullivan

Sullivan is now working with many of the affected businesses to appeal the West End assessments. But ultimately, he believes more policy tools are needed than the ones currently offered to business owners to help them cope with unexpected increases in value. Three-year averaging, a system where property owners can spread the increase out over several years, is "a joke" in the face of such extreme increases, he said.

Five-year averaging is something the city has said it will implement, but not until 2019, Regan said. He'd like to see the province allow split assessments, which involves assessing the unbuilt "air space" (the future condos) at the lower residential property tax rate.

But, he observed, the wheels of government never seem to turn very quickly.

"It's just like in … residential housing," Regan said. "How long did it take the Liberals to close the barn doors? The horse was way out of the gate."

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Board of Trade raises the alarm

ECONOMICS

Costs of daycare, housing hurting private sector: report

David P. Ball
Metro | Vancouver

The Vancouver region's influential organization of businesses has joined the cacophony of alarms set off by skyrocketing housing costs, less than four months before the British Columbia election in which affordability is a crucial plank.

And the 5,000-member Greater Vancouver Board of Trade's pre-election report suggests the private sector is demanding more action from all levels of government, including in making childcare more affordable.

"We hope to ensure the priorities of our region's business community are integral part of conversations on the campaign trail leading up to the May 9 election," said Board CEO and president Iain Black, in a statement.

According to the 2017 Provincial Election Platform, released Tuesday, three in every five of its member businesses in the region said housing unaffordability has made it harder to recruit and keep employees.

That figure — gleaned from a survey of the Board's membership last fall, representing every industry in the region — is more than double the number of members who said affordability was not affecting employee recruitment (27 per cent) and weren't sure its effect (14 per cent).

"Low housing affordability reduces the region's ability to attract and retain talent, particularly when it comes to younger demographics," the report stated. "Decreased access to skilled human capital has the potential to deter businesses from locating or growing in the Greater Vancouver region."

Two-thirds of the survey's respondents said the provincial government has not done enough to address housing affordability, compared to just more than a quarter that supported B.C.'s response.

The Platform's recommendations weren't just restricted to making housing more affordable, however.

Amidst scrutiny following a toddler's Jan. 18 death in an unlicensed daycare, and fees out of many families' reach averaging $45 daily in Vancouver, the Board took a stand critical of the situation shortage of affordable, licensed spaces.

Iain Black smiles as B.C. Premier Christy Clark speaks after announcing his resignation as an MLA to become the CEO of the Vancouver Board of Trade in 2011. DARRYL DYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

> Low housing affordability reduces the region's ability to attract and retain talent. Greater Vancouver Board of Trade provincial election platform

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2147 – 4700 Kingsway, Burnaby

commissionaires.bc.ca/careers

Vancouver DIGEST

LELU ISLAND
First Nations join monitoring of LNG
Two B.C. First Nations have been named to a new environmental monitoring committee for the proposed $11.4 billion Pacific NorthWest LNG project.

The federal government says the Lax Kw'alaams Band and the Metlakatla First Nation have agreed to join the committee and work directly with provincial and federal authorities.

The project would put a natural gas liquefaction facility and export terminal on Lelu Island at the mouth of the Skeena River.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

SURREY
Man gets 17 years for home invasion and murder
A man convicted of killing a Surrey realtor during a home invasion has been sentenced to life in prison with no parole eligibility for 17 years.

Court heard 42-year-old Colin Hill was gunned down while fighting to give his wife and children more time to hide after Khouri Lamar Green forced his way into their house in July 2015.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

SAFETY
Workers need protection: Labour group
The B.C. Federation of Labour says the province needs to do more to make workplaces safer after two people were killed at Okanagan timber facilities over the past five days.

The group points to the death of a worker at a log sorting facility in Lumby on Friday, as well as that of a mill worker in Kelowna on Monday.

The RCMP and Workers' Compensation Board are investigating both incidents.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

CRANBROOK
Few details available on deer cull
The province has confirmed a deer cull is under way in Cranbrook, but staff with the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations are not providing any details.

The city has not responded to requests for a comment.

It received backlash last year after quietly capturing and euthanizing 20 deer in areas where residents had complained about increased numbers of urban deer.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Rezoning proposal under fire

CHINATOWN

Honour 'pre-existing grain' of area, urban planner says

Wanyee Li
Metro | Vancouver

As developers and existing residents continue to jostle for space in Vancouver's rapidly changing Chinatown, an open house on the city's rezoning plan for the area is re-igniting concerns about preserving the neighbourhood's authenticity.

An open house on proposed changes to the Chinatown plan is scheduled for Saturday. If council accepts those changes, buildings in Chinatown could be built as high as 120 feet (about 12 storeys) and frontages can be as wide as 200 feet.

But that doesn't match the existing texture of the neighbourhood, which is made up of small independent stores and low-storey buildings, said urban planner Andy Yan.

Advocates worry that small businesses like this one in Vancouver's Chinatown will be pushed out by development. WANYEE LI/METRO

"Given the pre-existing grain of the neighbourhood, I don't think it's appropriate to bring a development that is modelled (after) areas of surplus industrial brown fields," he said.

"It's invasive to an established neighbourhood like Chinatown."

Yan wants the city to take a "slow urbanism" approach, where the neighbourhood's existing height and density are taken into account.

"It talks about a more bespoken urbanism that is more connected to the pre-existing community," he said.

But city councillor Raymond Louie is quick to point out staff have the difficult task of coming up with a plan that meets both council's demands as well as economic realities.

Dividing land assemblies to less than 200 feet would not be cost effective, he said.

"(Staff) are trying to balance off all the other aspects of what council has asked for — additional social housing, preservation of heritage, making sure that these buildings are built to the highest environmental standards, and making sure that these buildings are ready to hook up into our district energy systems."

Louie says fears about big block stores displacing small businesses are unfounded because the new rules, if accepted, would limit retail storefronts to 50 feet. It's one of many examples of the city listening to public input, he said.

"Staff have heard clearly that some of these large store fronts in these new buildings, particularly the HSBC and the BMO bank frontages, are too wide," he said.

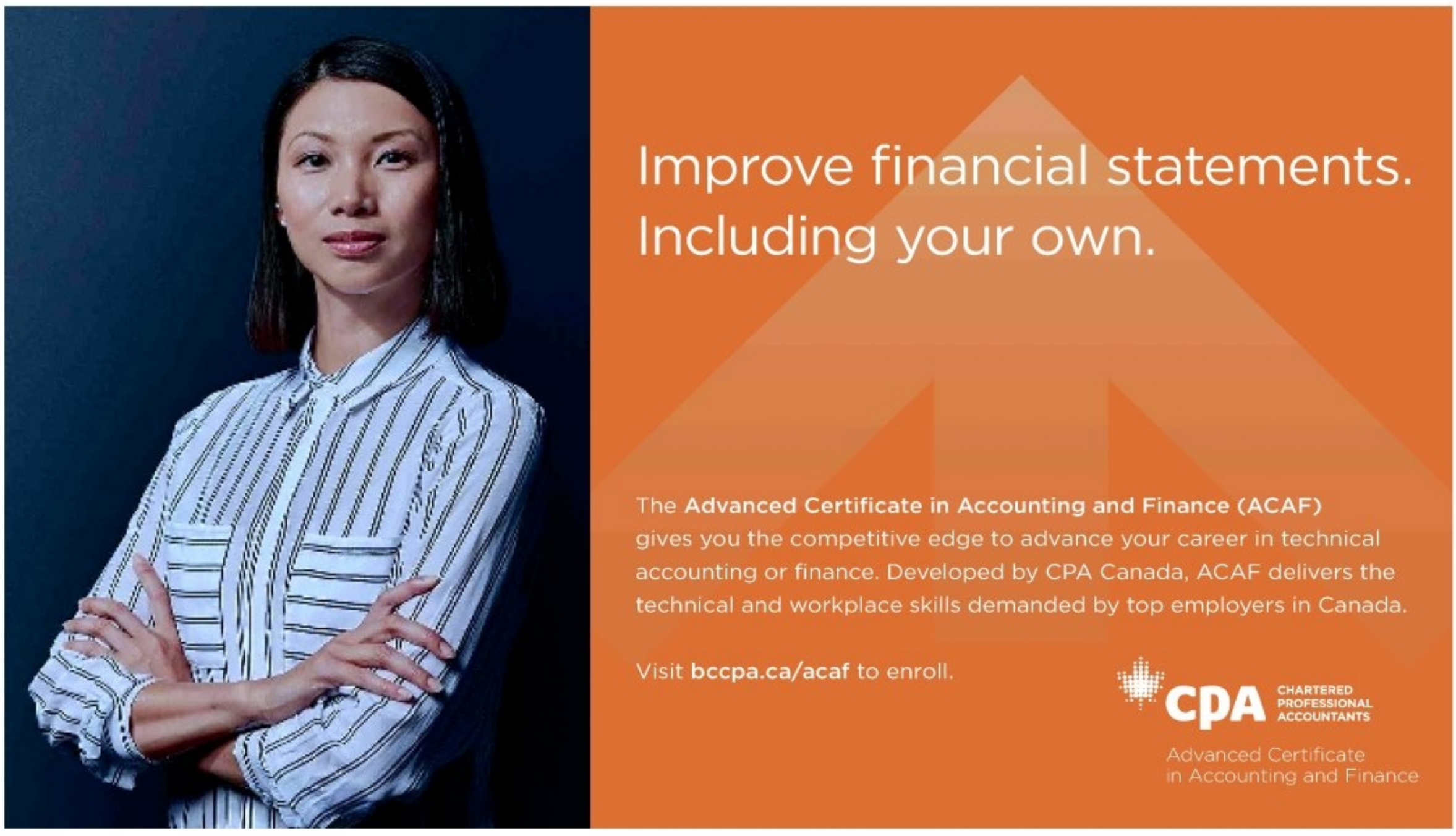
But Chinatown advocates say that the city is not respecting the community at the most basic level, because the open house is taking place during the weeklong Chinese New Year celebrations.

"This is a time when we're supposed to celebrating Chinese culture, but the City wants to show us how they plan to destroy it instead," said a sternly worded email from the Save Chinatown Heritage group.

Louie said the open house is an opportunity for people to further engage with the consultation process.

OPEN HOUSE

- Saturday Feb. 4, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Chinese Cultural Centre Auditorium
- Topic: Proposed changes to the Chinatown Economic Revitalization Action Plan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Trump ban having impact on research

TRAVEL

Some in academic community hurt by order

Aref Bolandnazar and his wife, Roya Arabloodariche
THE CANADIAN PRESS

When Aref Bolandnazar flew home to New York after visiting family in Iran, he didn't think to say a tearful goodbye to his wife — after all, she was just supposed to stay an extra week before returning to the United States.

But that was 10 days ago, and Bolandnazar hasn't seen his wife since. When Roya Arabloodariche tried to check in at an Iranian airport on Saturday, she was told she could not enter the U.S. due to an executive order signed by President Donald Trump.

"Our future was destroyed immediately," said Bolandnazar.

They are Iranian citizens who both hold advanced degrees from the University of British Columbia.

The pair obtained visas to live in New York while Bolandnazar completes his finance and economics PhD at Columbia University.

Arabloodariche, an electrical engineer, had hoped to get her green card and work in the United States. Now, Bolandnazar, 29, said he expects them both to pursue their academic and career goals elsewhere — ideally in Canada.

The husband and wife are just two members of the academic community in North America who have been hurt by the order signed by Trump to ban entry of citizens for 90 days from seven majority-Muslim countries.

Universities Canada, which represents 97 universities across the country, said the immigration ban is already having a "real, immediate and profound" impact on research partnerships, international students, academic conference participation and field visits, as well as family relationships.

The American Association of Universities has also called for the ban to "end as quickly as possible."

Amir Abdi, a PhD candidate in the electrical and computer engineering department at UBC and recipient of a prestigious Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship, was invited to present as an author at a medical imaging conference in Florida next month.

Abdi, an Iranian citizen who is in Canada on a temporary resident visa, will not be able to attend to help present his team's work.

He said conferences exist for academics to make connections, exchange knowledge with others and contribute to research in their field.

But because of Trump's "unjust and inhumane" executive order, scholars are being penalized, he said.

"I cannot believe that the U.S. president would believe that scholars could make America unsafe. We are actually the ones who are making every move to improve the human condition," he said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Muslim leader heartened

TERRORISM

Outpouring of support after attack on Quebec mosque

A vigil to remember those killed and injured during a shooting rampage at a mosque in Quebec City heard from a religious leader Tuesday about a rise in Islamophobia and the struggle to connect rather than divide Canadians.

Ismail Mohamed-Nur, the imam at Victoria's Al-Iman mosque, said he is heartened by the outpouring of support from Canadians since Sunday's attack that left six dead and 19 wounded.

"We gather here today to show our defiance of hate," said Mohamed-Nur. "Love truly conquers hate."

Victoria police estimated 3,000 people gathered outside of Victoria City Hall, halting traffic on a downtown street and crowding around the statue of Sir. John A. Macdonald, Canada's first prime minister, that stands at the building's entrance.

He called for love and togetherness during a brief address to the crowd.

"We live in a time where people try so very hard to divide us, but it only brings us closer and makes us stronger," Mohamed-Nur said. "This is a battle that is ongoing."

Similar vigils have been held across Canada with thousands calling for unity and more understanding following the shootings.

Victoria Mayor Lisa Helps drew cheers when she said Muslims are welcome in her city.

"We love you," she said. "We support you. You are welcome here." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Nearly 3,000 people gathered in solidarity with the victims of the Quebec City mosque shooting during the vigil in Victoria Tuesday. CHAD HIPOLITO/THE CANADIAN PRESS

TRANS MOUNTAIN PIPELINE

Premier in conflict of interest, groups say

The British Columbia Supreme Court is being asked to reverse the provincial government's decision to approve a pipeline proposal over an alleged conflict of interest between the premier and the project's proponents.

Democracy Watch and PIPE UP Network have applied for a judicial review of the environmental assessment certificate granted earlier this year by the province for Kinder Morgan Canada's $6.8-billion project.

Documents filed Tuesday in court say the approval process is tainted by $560,000 in political donations made over six years to B.C.'s Liberal party by Kinder Morgan and various oil shippers interested in using the pipeline.

The application also points to $300,000 that Premier Christy Clark received while leader of the B.C. Liberals, although the premier announced recently she would no longer take the party's $50,000 a year stipend.

The advocacy groups say in their petition that any reasonable, informed and thoughtful person could not help but conclude that the government would have at least been subconsciously affected by the financial contributions.

None of the allegations have been proven in court and neither Clark, nor her ministers of environment and natural gas who were named in the lawsuit were immediately available to comment.

The Trans Mountain project would build a second pipeline that runs from near Edmonton to Burnaby, B.C., and would nearly triple the carrying capacity and increase tanker traffic sevenfold.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

BY THE NUMBERS

$560,000

The political donations made by Kinder Morgan to the B.C. Liberal Party over six years.

$6.8 billion

The cost of Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline.

IN BRIEF

Surrey man charged with assault on police

A 29-year-old Surrey man has been charged after allegedly assaulting police officers at Metrotown station.

According to a press release on Tuesday, Transit Police spotted a man with an open cider on the SkyTrain platform at Metrotown station at 9:45 p.m. Sunday. When approached, police claim the man smashed the rest of his six-pack on the ground and began to fight with officers. He allegedly slapped one officer in the face and grabbed the groin of another.

He also allegedly spat in an officer's face while awaiting transport to jail.

The officers were not injured.

Adam Brad Waters, 29, of Surrey, has been charged with two counts of assaulting a police officer and one count of willfully resisting a police officer. He made an initial appearance in court and was released on the condition that he not use SkyTrain or Canada Line.

JEFF HODSON/METRO

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Muslims struggling with shock of attack

QUEBEC CITY

Families of victims relying on charitable donations

Azzedine Najd and Fadwa Achmaoui stand by a memorial Tuesday near the site of the Quebec City shooting. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Ahmed Ech-Chahedy was standing about 30 metres away when the gunfire started.

The man carried an "assault rifle," he said. He took his time. And his face was not covered — contrary to early reports, he said in an interview.

Ech-Chahedy, a taekwando instructor, was with his son and one of the boy's friends, when the shooter entered the mosque.

"If I think about it, it probably lasted five or six minutes," said Ech-Chahedy, who managed to flee the building and shelter in a nearby restaurant. "It was planned because even the way he fired at people — he was calm."

Mohamed Labidi, the vice-president of the Centre Culturel Islamique de Québec, told Torstar that, during a Monday night meeting, one member of the Muslim community claimed to have been approached a few days earlier by an individual who was asking for money.

Labidi said they claimed that the person was in fact the alleged killer, 27-year-old Alexandre Bissonnette, who is charged with six counts of murder and five counts of attempted murder.

The consequences of the shooter's actions are known now to all: Six men are dead while two more remain in hospital in critical but stable condition.

But a Muslim community that is still struggling with shock and grief is also now being forced to cope with the administration of a murderous tragedy that has widowed and orphaned women and children and ripped apart families and friendships.

So far, the families of the dead are relying on charitable donations from organizations like Islamic Relief, which sent a team of people from Montreal and the Toronto area to assess the needs and co-ordinate delivery of the necessary support.

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VANCOUVER

Parliament debates Trump's Muslim ban

The Liberal government is holding the line on its immigration and refugee policy in the wake of the U.S. travel ban, but leaving the door open to future adjustments as they continue to study the far-reaching - and fast-changing - implications.

"We have a very robust and welcoming refugee system," Immigration Minister Ahmed Hussen said Tuesday.

"We don't develop policy on the fly. We have to make sure that we understand all the implications, to make sure that we stick to our numbers and make sure that we develop policy after careful consideration of all the implications."

The Liberal cabinet minister was responding to calls - including from the New Democrats - to do more to fill the gaps left by U.S. President Donald Trump's temporary immigration ban on people from seven Muslim-majority countries and his indefinite bar to Syrian refugees.

"Canada must step up to do its part," said NDP immigration critic Jenny Kwan. "There is much more that Canada can do and must do."

At Kwan's request, MPs held an emergency debate Tuesday evening on the U.S. travel ban and how Canada should respond.

NDP Leader Tom Mulcair THE CANADIAN PRESS

In the debate, NDP Leader Tom Mulcair urged the government to lift an "artificial, arbitrary" cap on the number of Syrian refugees who can be brought to Canada through private sponsorships, which is currently set at 1,000 applications — a target that was reached over the weekend.

"A cap such as this one, especially when the United States has banned admission to Syrian refugees for an indeterminate time is completely unacceptable and goes against the international law that has been advocated since the Second World War," Mulcair said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

United States called a 'threat' by Europe

POLITICS

EU chief groups its ally with Russia and China

E.U. President Donald Tusk, right, said the Trump administration is part of an external "threat," together with China, Russia, radical Islam, war and terror. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/GETTY IMAGES

The leader of the European Union put longtime ally the United States in a "threat" category on Tuesday, insisting that President Donald Trump is contributing to the "highly unpredictable" outlook for the bloc.

In a letter to 27 EU leaders before Friday's summit in Malta, EU President Donald Tusk mentioned the Trump administration as part of an external "threat" together with China, Russia, radical Islam, war and terror.

Echoing statements from many European capitals, he said that those global challenges, "as well as worrying declarations by the new American administration, all make our future highly unpredictable."

He said that "particularly the change in Washington puts the European Union in a difficult situation; with the new administration seeming to put into question the last 70 years of American foreign policy."

This year marks the centennial of the U.S. entry in the First World War, and it marked the beginning of the American century as well as the enduring trans-Atlantic bond with Europe. Tensions have risen though since Trump was elected U.S. president.

"We should remind our American friends of their own motto: United we stand, divided we fall," Tusk said in the letter.

Britain wasn't part of the letter since it is poised to leave the EU and is only scheduled to attend part of the leaders' meeting in La Valletta. The decision to leave was the biggest setback for the EU in decades, and Trump didn't endear himself with many EU leaders by saying that Brexit "will be a tremendous asset and not a tremendous liability."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

REACTION

Academics speak out against ban

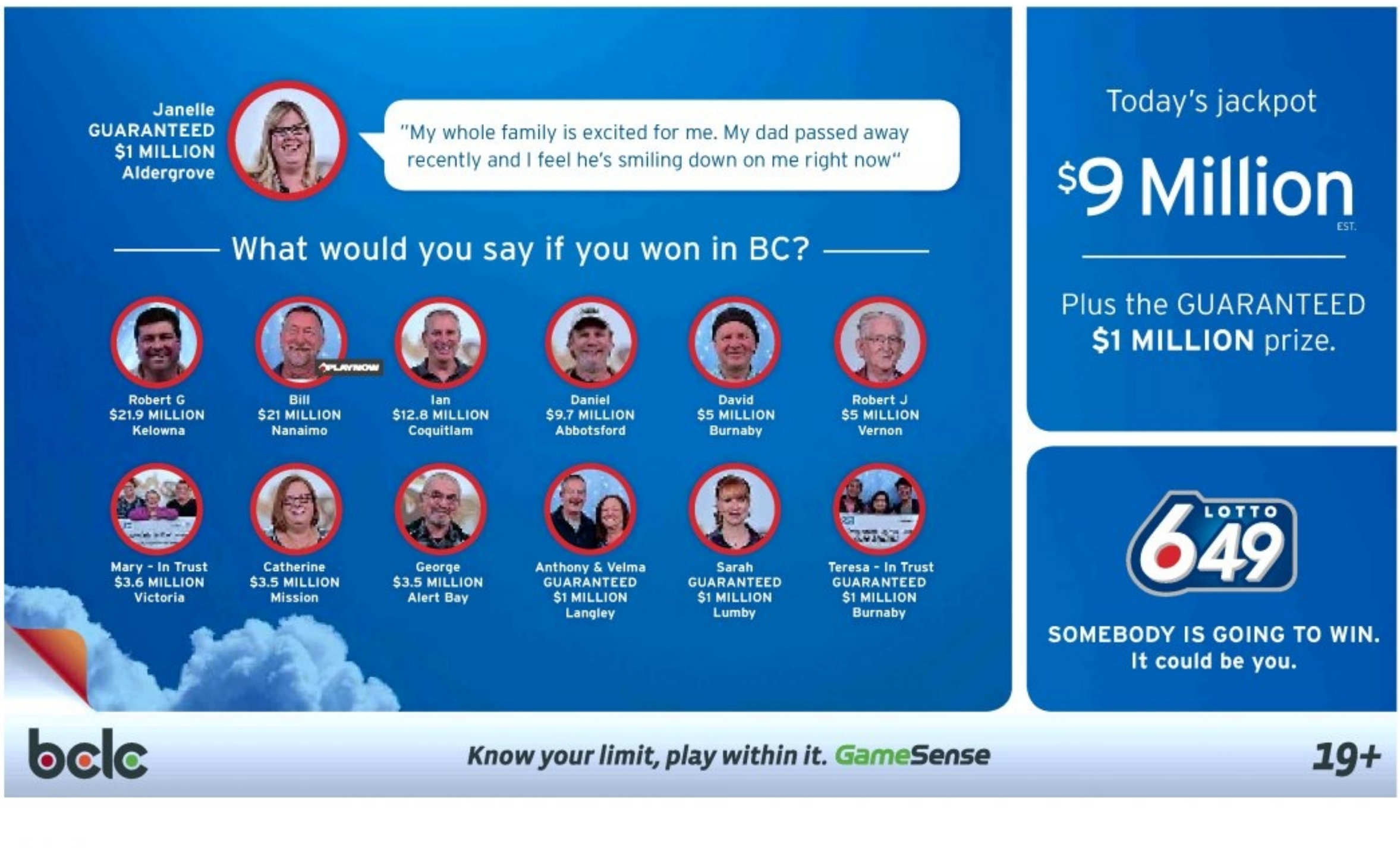
More than 4,000 university professors, administrators and researchers have signed a petition to boycott international academic conferences in the U.S. to show solidarity with Muslim colleagues affected by U.S. President Donald Trump's travel ban.

"It is a support to our (Muslim) colleagues in this beleaguered time," said Haroon Akram-Lodhi, an economics and international development studies professor at Trent University in Peterborough, one of many Canadian academics on board.

Another online petition denouncing the ban led by American academics has collected more than 18,000 signatures, including 50 Nobel Laureates.

A National Science Foundation report found 5.2 million of the 29 million scientists and engineers in the U.S. are immigrants.

"The order institutionalizes racism, and fosters an environment in which people racialised as Muslim are vulnerable to ongoing and intensifying acts of violence and hatred," said the petition. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE



Supreme Court nominee revealed

POLITICS

Donald Trump introduces Neil Gorsuch in prime time

Donald Trump congratulates Neil Gorsuch during a TV address from the White House on Tuesday. SUSAN WALSH/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Donald Trump's past life as a television showman provided an irresistible comparison for the media covering his nomination of Neil Gorsuch to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Trump's announcement from the White House on Tuesday had a prime-time slot with broadcast and cable news networks all on hand, genuine suspense over the choice and, finally, the big reveal when Gorsuch and his wife, Louise, emerged from a doorway at the host's — make that the president's — request.

The nomination of Gorsuch, a fast-rising conservative judge with a writer's flair, set up a fierce fight with Democrats over a jurist who could shape America's legal landscape for decades to come.

At 49, Gorsuch is the youngest Supreme Court nominee in a quarter-century. He's known on the Denver-based 10th Circuit Court of Appeals for clear, colloquial writing, advocacy for court review of government regulations, defence of religious freedom and skepticism toward law enforcement.

"Judge Gorsuch has outstanding legal skills, a brilliant mind, tremendous discipline and has earned bipartisan support," Trump declared, announcing the nomination in his first televised prime-time address from the White House.

Gorsuch thanked Trump for entrusting him with "a most solemn assignment." Outlining his legal philosophy, he said: "It is the rule of judges to apply, not alter, the work of the people's representatives. A judge who likes every outcome he reaches is very likely a bad judge."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Five More Days of Feasting at *Dine Out* Vancouver Festival

This year's *Dine Out* Vancouver Festival has been one for the cookbooks – from delectable food truck favourites at Street Food City to international culinary adventures with the World Chef Exchange dinner series, to charitable initiatives like the Chef Soup Experiment. But *Dine Out* is not over yet! There are still five more days to feast at culinary events and take advantage of prix fixe menus at over 280 restaurants. Here are five ways to make the most of the remainder of *Dine Out* Vancouver Festival:

Craft Beer and Tacos Tour (February 2, 3 & 4) – Quite possibly the greatest pairing that mankind has ever seen, Vancouver Brewery Tours' Craft Beer and Tacos Tours brings guests to Big Rock Urban Brewery and Strathcona Beer Company for beer flights and snacks, followed by a taco extravaganza at Tacofino Gastown.

Sip, Savour and Shop on Main (February 3, 4 & 5) – Check out Main Street's funky cafés, boutique shops and cool street art along Off the Eaten Track's Sip, Savour and Shop on Main tour. Visit eight local shops specializing in everything from honey to Japanese knives, and taste delicious local products like handmade smoked salami, kombucha and fish tacos.

Explore BC Wine Brunch at Boulevard Kitchen + Oyster Bar (February 4) – Indulge in this elegant brunch for wine-lovers, pairing seafood-focused cuisine by Boulevard's Executive Chef Alex Chen with wines from B.C.'s top wineries, including Church & State, Haywire and Tinhorn Creek. Learn about synergistic flavour combinations at this stand-up, mingle-style event.

World's Best Roasting, Coffee & Beer Tour (February 4) – Vancouver Coffee Snob and Canadian Craft Tours invite you to caffeinate at some of the finest cafes in the city, then ride the coffee buzz to a nearby craft brewery for a boozy beer tasting. See for yourself how coffee is transformed from green beans to a steaming cup of joe, and how craft beer is brewed up to perfection.

Neighbourhood Brunch Crawls along Robson Street (February 4) and Commercial Drive (February 5) – Pancakes, waffles and omelettes, oh my! Vancouver Foodster leads the ultimate neighbourhood brunch crawls that will satisfy even the most serious of weekend brunchers. Explore the West End or The Drive and taste a variety of dishes from classic eggs benny to brunch pizza.

For the full details:
DineOutVancouver.com

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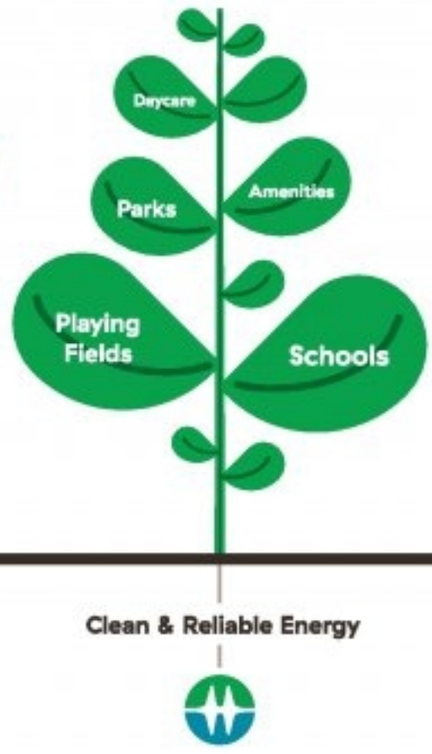

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There are several ways for you to get involved:

- ○ Read the discussion guide and complete the online feedback form at **bchydro.com/seed**
- ○ Provide a submission to **seed@bchydro.com**
- ○ Attend an **open house** in your neighbourhood:

Yaletown
Wednesday, February 1, 2017
5:00–8:00 p.m.
Wednesday, February 22, 2017
5:00–8:00 p.m.
Elsie Roy Elementary School
150 Drake Street, Vancouver

West End
Saturday, February 18, 2017
10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.
Monday, February 20, 2017
5:00–8:00 p.m.
St. Paul's Anglican Church
1130 Jervis Street, Vancouver

- ○ Attend a **small group roundtable discussion** in your neighbourhood. Please email **seed@bchydro.com** to sign up, as space is limited:

West End
Tuesday, January 31, 2017
Wednesday, February 15, 2017

Yaletown
Thursday, February 2, 2017
Thursday, February 16, 2017

*All 6:00–8:00 p.m.

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metro VIEWS
Your essential daily news
Wednesday, February 1, 2017

HOW TO BE A GOOD NEIGHBOUR

For Canadian Muslims, being feared, suspected or even threatened with violence can be a daily reality. **Amal Rana**, a Vancouver-based Muslim poet, educator and community organizer, shared five practical ways to show you won't stand for it — and that you care.

Speak up

Show your public support by writing your MP and provincial rep to encourage them to support legislation that benefits immigrants and refugees and fights Islamophobia.

It's important to do systematic things as well.

Create safety

Talk to local business owners about making your neighbourhood coffee shop, corner store or restaurant into a "safer zone" where people know they can take shelter if they're feeling harassed.

A 'refugees welcome' poster is a good first step.

Listen

Around the country, it's time to start "hard conversations" around dinner tables and in classrooms. Talk one-on-one about the real-life experience of Islamophobia and the negative stereotypes people hold about Islam.

You don't have to do it perfectly.

Check in

Look in on your Muslim neighbours and see if there's anything they need: some company, a walk to school or work, or a hand with the kids. This week of terrible news has been "deeply traumatic" Rana said, and trauma tends to be isolating. Being a friend can lighten the load.

I worry about the impact on not just our mental and spiritual health, but on our bodies.

Connect

If you attend a vigil or demonstration to condemn Islamophobia, don't just stand there: connect. "People often show up, but don't actually make contact with people there," Rana said. So introduce yourself.

That's where the meaningful, long-term support comes from. Once you've connected with each other, you can provide more personal support as well.

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Arnold Schwarzenegger blasted President Donald Trump's administration for making the United States look "stupid" with the travel ban.

SEE THE VIDEO ON THE METRO NEWS APP

Don't fear the kitchen

RECIPES

These simple dishes can get all new chefs up and cooking

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

If you've never learned to cook beyond opening a can, fear not. We're here with some easy recipes everyone needs in their back pocket to get started. Now all you need to do is put some music on, pour yourself a glass of wine and get cooking.

Pasta

It's impossible to build a cooking rolodex (does anyone still have a rolodex?) without a kick-ass pasta dish. Here is that dish.

Aside from the joy a bowl of pasta brings to a belly, most dishes are easy to prepare since many noodles cook up quicker than it takes to wait for the water to boil. Also, pasta is a great foundation for any kind of flavour profile and is a complete meal in itself.

We love this **Creamy Pea Tagliatelle** for it's breezy but impressive sauce.

Makes: 4 servings; Prep time: 10 minutes; Cook time: 20 minutes.
Ingredients:

- 500 g tagliatelle pasta
- 2 cups frozen peas
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 cup creme fraiche
- 3 tsp chopped chives or flat-leaf parsley

Three simple and scrumptious starter dishes: (clockwise from top) Chinese 5-Spice Chicken Tray Bake, Creamy Pea Tagliatelle and Broccoli and Cheese Soup. MAYA VISNYEI

Directions:

1. Cook the tagliatelle according to package directions. In the last minute of the pasta cooking process, drop the peas into the water. Drain both the pasta and peas.

2. Meanwhile, in a large skillet, heat the oil and sauté the onion and garlic for 5 minutes until fragrant. Stir in the creme fraiche. Add the pasta and peas, folding them with tongs to coat the pasta with the sauce. Sprinkle with chopped chives or flat-leaf parsley and serve.

Chicken

There's a reason chicken dishes are the most searched recipes on food websites. As proteins go, they're a great canvas for sflavours and easy to prepare.

This **Chinese 5-Spice Chicken Tray Bake** uses less-expensive thighs for budget-sensitive novices, and it features a cooking method ideal for new chefs — tray baking. Allowing all your meal's ingredients to cook on the same baking sheet not only makes meal prep easier but, frankly, is a smart way to cook.

Makes: 4 servings; Prep time: 1 hour; Cook time: 20 minutes.
Ingredients:

- 3 Tbsp olive oil, plus extra for onions
- 4 to 5 garlic cloves, pressed
- 1 Tbsp rice vinegar
- 1 Tbsp brown sugar
- 1 tsp Chinese 5-spice
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 6 large skinless, boneless chicken thighs
- 2 onions, peeled and sliced
- 1 tsp fresh chopped cilantro

Directions:

1. Combine olive oil, garlic, rice vinegar, brown sugar, 5-spice and salt in a large resealable plastic bag. Add chicken thighs; seal and coat chicken with sauce. Chill at least 1 hour or overnight.

2. Preheat oven to 400. Slice and coat onion in a bit of olive oil. Spray baking sheet with non-stick cooking spray. Scatter onion on baking sheet.

3. Remove chicken from refrigerator and arrange on top of onion. Roast until chicken is cooked through.

4. Remove tray from oven and let cool for a few minutes. Sprinkle chicken and onion with cilantro and serve warm.

Soup

Let's be honest, you can't live in Canada and not have a soup dish you can call your own. And, yes, you should definitely take credit for this easy **Broccoli and Cheese Soup**. In addition to travelling well for lunches or snacks, soups use up lots of leftovers and can handle any amount of vegetables you can jam into them.

Plus, like this one, they only benefit from the addition of cheese.

Makes 4 servings; Prep time: 10 minutes; Cook time: 25 minutes.
Ingredients:

- 4 cups broccoli florets and stem (cut off tough ends) chopped fairly small
- 1 onion chopped
- 2 cups chopped, potato
- 2 cloves garlic minced
- 1 glug olive oil
- 4 cups stock (vegetable or chicken, low sodium)
- 1 1/2 cups milk
- 1 cup grated cheddar
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Sauté onion and garlic in a Dutch oven or other large, heavy-bottomed pot for about 5 minutes until soft.

2. Add vegetables and stock and allow to simmer for about 20 minutes until the vegetables are tender.

3. In small batches, ladle the broth and vegetables into your blender and puree. Pour each batch into a bowl as you go. Pour the puree back into your pot.

4. Over medium heat add milk and cheese and stir until the cheese melts. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Call for ban on adverts to battle childhood obesity

INDUSTRY CRITICISM

New report wants federal help in fight to limit marketing

In an effort to combat the rising tide of childhood obesity and promote healthier eating, the Heart and Stroke Foundation is calling on the federal government to pass legislation restricting food and beverage marketing to children.

"Given experts' prediction that today's children may be the first generation to have poorer health and shorter lifespans than their parents, we need to be bold," writes Diego Marchese, interim CEO and executive vice-president of Heart and Stroke, in the 2017 Report on the Health of Canadians released Wednesday.

Obesity rates in Canadian children have tripled since 1979 — one in three kids are now overweight or obese — putting them at greater risk for developing health problems such as heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure and diabetes, the report notes. It argues that restrictions on marketing to those under 16 would protect children, support parents and level the playing field for industry.

Industry's efforts over the past decade to self-regulate, through the Canadian Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative, have been "a failure," says the report. "As long as regulation is optional, the playing field is not even. Even if the criteria were strong, companies that comply and put children's health first would be at a competitive disadvantage."

Calls for regulations have been made before. Heart and Stroke is part of the Stop Marketing to Kids Coalition started in 2014, which is made up of 11 non-governmental organizations, including Toronto Public Health.

And Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, in his 2015 mandate letter to Minister of Health Jane Philpott, said he expects her to promote public health by "introducing new restrictions on the commercial marketing of unhealthy food and beverages to children, similar to those now in place in Quebec."

25 million

The study found children between the ages of 2 and 11 see 25 million food and beverage ads, on their 10 favourite websites in a year.

The report also highlights Quebec, which has the highest vegetable and fruit intake among Canadian children and the lowest obesity rate among those aged 6 to 11. Legislation introduced there in 1980 banned commercial ads of goods and services to kids under age 13.

For its report, the foundation commissioned Monique Potvin Kent, an expert in food and beverage marketing to children. She reviewed the digital ads shown over a year on the top 10 websites aimed at children between the ages 2 and 11, and youth aged 12 to 17. Her research shows that more than 90 per cent of online food and beverage ads seen by children and teens are for unhealthy items high in fat, sodium or sugar.

Children and teens are bombarded with ads for restaurants, cakes, cookies, ice cream, cereal and sugar-sweetened beverages.

"There are many ads on TV directed at kids and it's even higher for teens, but there are only so many spots available, there is a limit," writes Potvin Kent, who is an assistant professor in the University of Ottawa's School of Epidemiology, Public Health and Preventive Medicine. "On the Internet, there are absolutely no limits."

Also included in the report was a survey of 2,401 Canadian adults interviewed online by Pollara Strategic Insights. It found that 70 per cent feel children are exposed to too many ads by the food and beverage industry, and 71 per cent think industry has an unfair advantage over parents when it comes to influencing what kids consume due to how much money it spends on ads.

Children and teens are bombarded with ads for restaurants, cakes, cookies, cereal, ice cream and much more. ISTOCK

David Ma, an associate professor at the University of Guelph's department of Human Health and Nutritional Sciences, welcomes the initiative. But, he adds, "There's no magic bullet."

"If (legislation) were implemented, obesity wouldn't go away overnight," Ma said. "If enacted, this would be one part of an overall strategy that we need to implement."

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New McLaren 720S leaked ahead of rumoured Geneva debut

Completely powered by electrons

REVIEW

Bolt a fairly affordable entrance to the EV market

Dan Ilika
AutoGuide.com

Don't let the popularity of the Tesla Model S fool you: Electric vehicles aren't selling as well as perhaps they should be.

Get past range anxiety and long charging times, and the astronomical upfront cost of EV ownership is no doubt keeping plenty of potential buyers away. Automakers know this all too well, and a handful are working on electrified solutions that fit the needs — and budgets — of the masses. And the first of this new class of relatively affordable, everyday-friendly EVs to hit the market is the 2017 Chevrolet Bolt. Aside from its confounding name — conversations about the car invariably include descriptors like "that's Bolt with a 'B'" for clarity's sake — the Bolt joins the alternative fuel fray with little doubt about its electric origins.

Because unlike the Volt, which features a gas engine (it doesn't send power to the wheels directly but essentially recharges the battery pack on the fly), the Bolt is powered purely by electrons.

The 60-kilowatt-hour battery pack, a lithium-ion unit, spans the entire length of the car's cabin and can be plugged into Levels I, II or III charging stations. Using the former means long charging times, while the latter, known as DC Fast Charging, can top the battery up with 145 kilometres of range in about 30 minutes, or juice it up completely in about two hours.

Topping the battery up completely using a Level II charger, meanwhile, takes a little less than 10 hours and provides an estimated range of 383 kilometres.

Departing Menlo Park, Calif., with a fully charged battery our tester was more than fit for an extended tour of the rain-soaked San Francisco Bay Area. With a roundabout journey spanning about 160 km on the day's docket, battery life was of little concern.

With the instant torque provided by the electric powertrain, the Bolt offered impressive acceleration — a useful tool not for racing along city streets, but rather when passing and merging.

The electrified gusto did, however, combine well with the Bolt's responsive ride, a product of wheels that sit as near as possible to the corners, and low centre of gravity, created by the battery pack, to have a little bit of fun when called upon.

The battery pack's low positioning in the car isn't always smile-inducing, though. Tipping the scales at 435 kilograms, it creates a weight imbalance in the Bolt that can lead to a see-sawing effect over uneven pavement, something that became quickly evident on the Bay Area's roly-poly highways.

It's definitely not a deal-breaker, but does take some getting used to — particularly for those who are new to electric vehicles.

THE CHECKLIST | 2017 CHEVROLET BOLT REVIEW

THE BASICS

Motor: Single motor drive unit
Output: 200 hp, 266 lb-ft
Transmission: Fixed ratio
Battery Size: 60 kWh
Estimated Range: 383 kilometres
Price: Starts at $42,795 (before available incentives)

LOVE IT

- Silky smooth acceleration
- Relative lack of range anxiety
- Bright and open cabin

LEAVE IT

- Jarring regenerative brakes
- Cost of active safety options

SUV

What we know about the 2019 Ford Explorer so far

Ford is working hard on the next generation of its popular Explorer SUV.

When it comes to mid-sized SUVs, none sells better than the Ford Explorer in the U.S. — and for good reason. The popular seven-seater has been a staple in the American automaker's lineup since the early 1990s and now the sixth-generation model is in development.

Although it will go on sale as a 2019 model year, there's a bit we already know about the next-generation SUV as spy photographers have caught a prototype testing.

It rides on a new platform

The 2019 Ford Explorer is expected to ride on a new platform called "D6." Currently it's underpinned by the D4 platform also found on the Ford Flex and Lincoln MKT, but look for the D6 to make an appearance in several of Ford's models in the future. It's believed that the new platform will take advantage of lightweight materials like aluminum, similar to what Ford did with its popular F-150 pickup. In addition, rumours suggest it can be configured for front-, rear- and all-wheel drive, but don't expect it to go rear-wheel drive.

It will likely lose its naturally aspirated V6 engine

Like the refreshed Ford Mustang, the automaker is expected to drop the naturally aspirated V6 engine from the Ford Explorer's lineup. Look to see the 2.3-litre four cylinder and 3.5-litre V6 EcoBoost engines live on, with slight updates to enhance performance and fuel economy. The deletion of the naturally aspirated V6 will help boost the average fuel economy and emissions across the entire Explorer range.

STATS

Sales
Last year, the Ford Explorer sold 248,507 units, making it the 14th overall best seller in the U.S.

Look for it to debut in late 2017 or early 2018

There's a possibility Ford will debut the 2019 Explorer at the 2017 L.A. Auto Show, but it's more likely it will bow at the 2018 Detroit Auto Show.

Styling will be evolutionary rather than revolutionary

Although it's still hard to see with the heavily camouflage concealing the prototype, the new Explorer won't see any drastic styling changes.

The focus will be on using aluminum to shed weight, helping make it more fuel efficient as well as taking advantage of the new platform. Some would say the fifth-generation model did enough to change the popular SUV's styling that debuted as a 2011 model year.

It will continue to sell well

Last year, the Ford Explorer sold 248,507 units, making it the 14th overall best seller in the U.S. It's a safe assumption that regardless of how Ford decides to style the Explorer, it will continue to sell well among the mid-size SUV segment, especially for shoppers looking for seven seats. Currently the model starts from $35,039 including destination.

Arnie does his small part in big car

WHEELS ROUNDUP
News driving the auto industry brought to you by AutoGuide.com

MERCEDES-BENZ

Schwarzenegger hacks G-Wagen

When you're a world-renowned actor and former governor, you don't wait for Mercedes-Benz to make the car you want. Arnold Schwarzenegger recently took to Facebook to show off his latest new car, an all-electric Mercedes-Benz G-Wagen. If you're thinking the German automaker made a special one-off for Schwarzenegger, think again. The conversion was actually done by Kreisel Electric, a specialist for electromobility, and the SUV was presented to the public for the very first time at the Hahnenkamm race in Kitzbuhel, Austria. The actor is well known for his love of big, rugged SUVs, but at the same time, he's also a huge supporter of clean energy and clean cars. So instead of waiting for Mercedes to come out with an all-electric G-Wagen, he took matters into his own hands and had one created. The actor said the converted SUV has "500-some horsepower."

JASON SIU/AUTOGUIDE.COM

CARSAVER

Walmart set to sell cars

North America's largest retailer is edging is way into automotive sales with the help of the nation's largest new-car dealership franchise, AutoNation. Launching in April, Walmart's CarSaver program will make it a middleman for impulse car buyers and local dealerships. CarSaver is designed to allow shoppers to browse, select, finance, and insure a vehicle through its website or at kiosks in the store.

MATT POSKY/AUTOGUIDE.COM

SUPER BOWL

Lil Buck dances with Lexus LC500

Lexus has revealed a new Super Bowl commercial called Man & Machine featuring the 2017 LC500 coupe. The campaign consists of an extended ad, which the automaker uploaded to YouTube and a 30-second version set to debut during the second quarter of Super Bowl LI on Feb. 2. Both ads feature a performance by movement artist Lil Buck along with music by recording artist Sia. Lexus says the ads are intended to recognize parallels "between the shapes and movements of the human form and the power and athleticism of Lexus' most premium models."

SAM MCEACHERN/AUTOGUIDE.COM

metro SPORTS

Mark Johnson's 206-day #Letmecaddieforyou Twitter campaign is a success as Sergio Garcia will let the Englishman assist him in a Sept. 27 pro-am

LeBron on offence in war of words

NBA

Cavs star hits back against Barkley's criticism

Cavaliers forward LeBron James elevates for a dunk against Mavericks forward Dwight Powell on Monday night in Dallas. BRANDON WADE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LeBron James is done bowing to Sir Charles.

After he was criticized by Charles Barkley for questioning Cleveland's front office, James tore into the former NBA star and opinionated TV commentator on Monday night following a loss in Dallas. James not only countered what was said about him but he also attacked Barkley's character for some off-the-court missteps.

"I'm not going to let him disrespect my legacy like that," James told ESPN after the Cavs lost 104-97 to Dallas, dropping the defending champions to 7-8 in January. "I'm not the one who threw somebody through a window. I never spit on a kid. I never had unpaid debt in Las Vegas. I never said, 'I'm not a role model.' I never showed up to All-Star Weekend on Sunday because I was in Vegas all weekend partying.

"All I've done for my entire career is represent the NBA the right way. Fourteen years, never got in trouble. Respected the game. Print that."

Barkley has never been one to hold back his opinion on James or any other player, but the 11-time all-star was particularly critical of James last week after Cleveland's star complained about Cleveland's roster being "top-heavy" and questioning whether the team's front office was satisfied with one title.

Barkley said James was "whiny" and "inappropriate" and wondered about his motives. Barkley called James "the best player in the world" but wondered if he really wanted to compete. James initially dismissed Barkley, saying he was only trying to boost TV ratings. Barkley works as an in-studio host for TNT.

However, James decided he couldn't let those comments go and turned on Barkley, who never won an NBA title.

> **I'm tired of biting my tongue. There's a new sheriff in town.**
> LeBron James

"He's a hater. What makes what he says credible? Because he's on TV?" James said. "I know he wanted to retire a long time ago, but he can't. He's stuck up on that stage every week."

James also said if Barkley wants to continue any discussion, he knows where to find him.

"If this makes him want to talk to me, the schedule's out there," James said. "He knows every road arena I'll be in. Don't just come up to me at all-star and shake my hand and smile." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NFL

Kraft fires shots over Deflategate

Robert Kraft is pulling his punches over "Deflategate."

Well, some of them.

While the New England Patriots owner and once close confidant of NFL commissioner Roger Goodell wants to celebrate yet another trip to the Super Bowl this week, he also couldn't back down from a challenge Monday night to address the whole mess. So Kraft took a couple of shots during the Patriots' availability, yet also made sure not to temper the festive mood.

> **There's a time and a place to talk about problems. I'm going to stay focused on being here.**
> Robert Kraft

"Everybody wants to protect their family," Kraft said about the deflated footballs case from the 2014 AFC championship game that resulted in Tom Brady's four-game suspension, a $1-million fine for the franchise and the loss of its first-round draft pick in 2016.

"I think our family was involved, or accused of being involved, in something that was mishandled and became inappropriate. Sometimes in a complicated situation in business, people start pointing fingers, and we want to assure everyone that we are together."

Kraft then cited a Hebrew saying from the Old Testament.

"When tough times come," he translated, "there's nothing bad that happens that doesn't have good associated with it.

"In a way, that galvanized our team." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CFL

Clarke signs with Lions through 2018

The B.C. Lions have signed international defensive back Steven Clarke to a two-year contract that will team keep him in Vancouver through the 2018 season.

Clarke was eligible to enter free agency in February.

He had 48 defensive tackles through 16 games in 2015 before being granted early free agent status to pursue an NFL opportunity with the Tennessee Titans.

Clarke returned to B.C. just prior to training camp last year and made his 2016 debut in Week 5. He recorded 13 tackles, two knockdowns and a fumble recovery before suffering a season-ending injury in Calgary last August.

"Steven is a gifted defensive back who gives us valuable experience and stability in the secondary heading into 2017," Lions general manager and head coach Wally Buono said in a statement. THE CANADIAN PRESS

NHL

Rangers, Vigneault tack on 2 more years

Alain Vigneault has a record of 175-98-23 with the Rangers after Tuesday's 6-4 loss against the Blue Jackets. CHRISTIAN PETERSEN/GETTY IMAGES

Alain Vigneault didn't have to think long about whether he wanted an extension with the New York Rangers. So it was all settled pretty quickly.

Vigneault and the Rangers announced a new two-year deal Tuesday that runs through the 2019-20 season.

"It was a pretty easy decision as far as you're a coach and you want to have a chance and you got a first-class organization," the 55-year-old Vigneault said.

Vigneault was under contract through next season under the five-year deal he signed in June 2013.

1,100

Vigneault coached his 1,100th game last week.

He said general manager Jeff Gorton initially brought up the topic of an extension last summer because he didn't want the coach going into a lame-duck season. Talks began about a month ago.

"Rangers, Original Six (team), you don't get much better than this," Vigneault said. "When we go on the road there's a cult (following) there. It's a lot like when I was with the (Montreal Canadiens). I know I need to continue to get better and that's what I'm trying to do."

Vigneault is 175-98-23 with the Rangers after Tuesday night's 6-4 loss to Columbus. In addition to Montreal, he also previously coached the Vancouver Canucks. Vigneault led New York to the Stanley Cup Final in 2014 in his first season with the team. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

Police ready for protests at Super Bowl, says chief

Houston Police Chief Art Acevedo says authorities are ready to handle any protests that might occur during Super Bowl week in response to President Donald Trump's executive order on refugees and immigration.

Acevedo said that dealing with the potential for demonstrations has always been part of security planning efforts. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lowry lifts Raptors to OT victory over Pelicans

Kyle Lowry scored 33 points, including a huge basket with four seconds left in overtime, to lift the Toronto Raptors over the New Orleans Pelicans 108-106 on Tuesday.

The victory was just the struggling Raptors' second in eight outings.

Jonas Valanciunas added 20 points and 12 rebounds for the Raptors (30-19). THE CANADIAN PRESS

Epping opens up about being out

CURLING

Openly gay skip says he's backed by fellow athletes

It has been over five years since curler John Epping told family, friends, and peers in his sport's community that he was gay.

"I got a ton of messages," he said. "And the way people tried to relate it to me was just to say, 'Hey it's OK, we've got your back.' It came in so many different ways. It was pretty special."

Epping knew there was growing interest in his story about being gay in a men's team sport, but held off on sharing the news more widely as he didn't want it to be a distraction. So there was no news conference, no statement, no television feature.

"If somebody asks, I just talk about it," Epping said in his first in-depth interview on the subject. "And I know I probably should do more of these because it can help people. But I just look at it like, I haven't thought about going around broadcasting that I'm a gay person curling.

"This is my life. This is me ... it's a part of life, it's what it is."

Active elite male athletes revealing they're gay is still a rarity. For Epping, it's important to weigh in if it makes it easier for someone thinking about following his lead.

12

Gay leagues are quite popular and the 12th edition of the Canadian gay curling championship is next month in Montreal.

"If it can make a difference for one person reading this story or even just one person in my life, if I can influence or help in a positive way — right on," he said.

While it was difficult to initially come out, Epping feels it worked out well. The three-time Grand Slam winner said he received "loads of support".

"I would say I was very, very lucky and spoiled," he said after a recent practice session at the Leaside Curling Club in Toronto. "I hope it would be that way for everybody but I know it's not. I know we still have a long way to come in sports in general."

The 33-year-old from Peterborough, Ont., won his first Grand Slam in 2008 — The National — as a second on Wayne Middaugh's team. His first Slam title as a skip came in 2012 at the Players' Championship and he won the Canadian Open in 2015 with his current lineup of Mat Camm, Patrick Janssen and Tim March.

His rink is currently ranked seventh in the world. Epping also plays mixed doubles — a discipline that will make its Olympic debut next year.

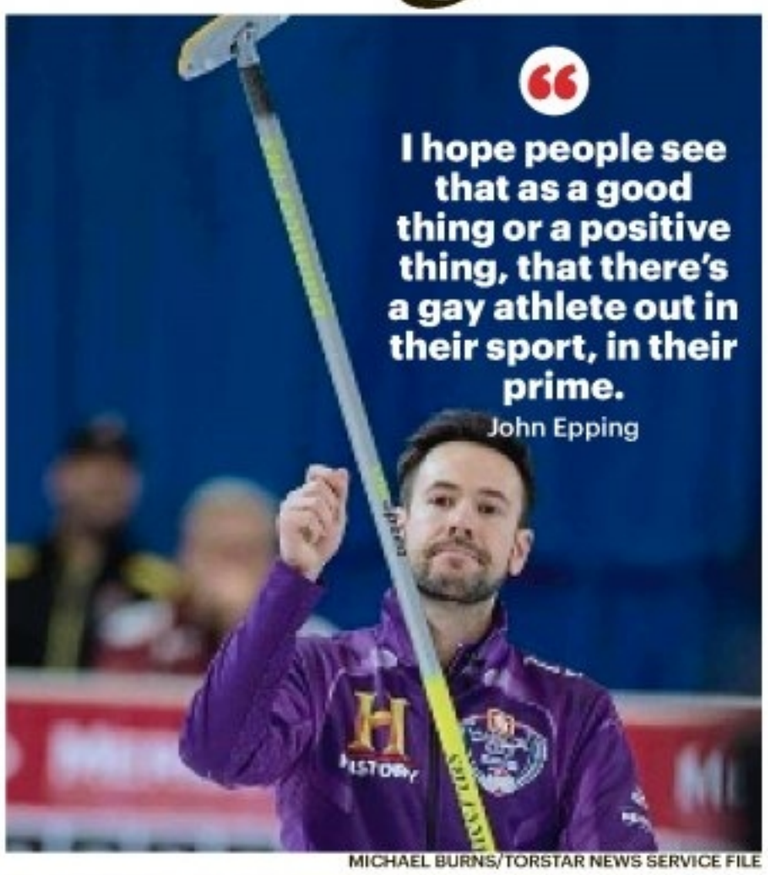
Epping serves as an ambassador for You Can Play, an organization that works to ensure safety and inclusion for all who participate in sports, including LGBTQ athletes, coaches, and fans.

"It's great to be involved with an organization like that, and trying to promote that and spread that," he said. "But like I said I've been lucky. The locker-room culture — nothing changed."

Epping, who is getting married in June, is playing in this week's Ontario men's championship in Cobourg, Ont. A win would send him to his first Tim Hortons Brier.

"I know the support isn't always there in every person's situation," Epping said. "In mine it was, and I'm very fortunate for that so I owe a lot of gratitude to those people. But I think it says a lot about curlers and I also think maybe it says something about the people I've surrounded myself with too in my life."

THE CANADIAN PRESS


I hope people see that as a good thing or a positive thing, that there's a gay athlete out in their sport, in their prime.
John Epping

MICHAEL BURNS/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE FILE

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PREMIER LEAGUE

Chelsea still in sight after Anfield draw

Simon Mignolet saved a late penalty after being at fault for an early goal, earning Liverpool a 1-1 draw against Chelsea that slowed the leaders' charge to the Premier League title.

The Belgium goalkeeper was caught unawares by an opportunistic free kick from David Luiz in the 24th minute as Chelsea took the lead against the run of play at Anfield on Tuesday.

Georginio Wijnaldum equalized for Liverpool in the 57th before Mignolet turned Diego Costa's penalty around the post in the 76th.

Simon Mignolet GETTY IMAGES

That save meant Liverpool avoided a fourth straight home loss in all competitions for the first time since 1923 and stayed 10 points behind Chelsea with 15 games left.

THE ASSOCIATED Ppress

DEADLINE DAY

A look at the big deals in England at the close of the January transfer window:

- **Watford striker Odion Ighalo,** pictured, joins Chinese side Changchun Yatai for £20M.
- **Napoli striker Manolo Gabbiadini** joins Southampton for a reported £14M.
- **Norwich midfielder Robbie Brady** to Burnley for club record £10.5M.
- **Aston Villa striker Jordan Ayew to Swansea** for £5M plus defender Neil Taylor.
- **Liverpool defender Mamadou Sakho** joins Crystal Palace on loan.

TONY MARSHALL/ GETTY IMAGES

SOCCER

Spurned NFL cities look to lure MLS

Dropped by the NFL, St. Louis and San Diego are among bidders from 12 areas applying for four MLS expansion teams.

Two of the teams, which have $150 million expansion fees, will start play in 2020. MLS commissioner Don Garber said Tuesday that having stadium financing in place is a condition for selection.

"We're at a point where there are so many cities looking for so few market opportunities that we can do the right thing by everyone and ensure that every aspect of their expansion plan is fully in place," Garber said.

MLS plans to announce its two selections by the end of the year. The percentage of government stadium financing will depend on the city.

Others to submit bids were from Charlotte, North Carolina; Cincinnati; Detroit; Indianapolis; Nashville, Tennessee; Phoenix; Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina; Sacramento, California; San Antonio; and Tampa-St. Petersburg, Florida. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MAKE IT TONIGHT

Spicy Enchilada Stuffed Sweet Potatoes

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

You won't miss the taco shell once you combine sweet potatoes with a meat filling that delivers rich flavours.

Ready in 1 hour
Prep time: 30 minutes
Serves 4

Ingredients
- 4 medium sweet potatoes
- 1 Tbsp oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 lb ground beef
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1 Tbsp chili powder
- 1 tsp cumin
- ¼ tsp ground dry mustard
- ¼ tsp cinnamon
- ¼ tsp garlic salt
- ¼ tsp dried oregano
- ½ a 156 ml can of tomato paste
- butter
- Monterey Jack Cheese
- sour cream
- cilantro

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Scrub sweet potatoes and pierce a few times with a fork. Place on baking sheet and bake 40 – 45 minutes, until easily pierced with a fork.

2. Meanwhile, add oil to a medium-sized pan over medium-low heat. Add garlic and onion and sauté until tender, about 5 minutes. Add beef to the pan, sprinkle with salt and sauté until cooked through. Drain fat if needed/desired. Add chili powder, cumin, mustard, cinnamon, garlic salt and oregano and stir. Add tomato paste and stir again until incorporated. Simmer for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.

3. Remove potatoes once they've cooked through, slice down middle and, using a fork, break up filling and add a bit of butter. Spoon enchilada filling over top. Dress with additional toppings and enjoy

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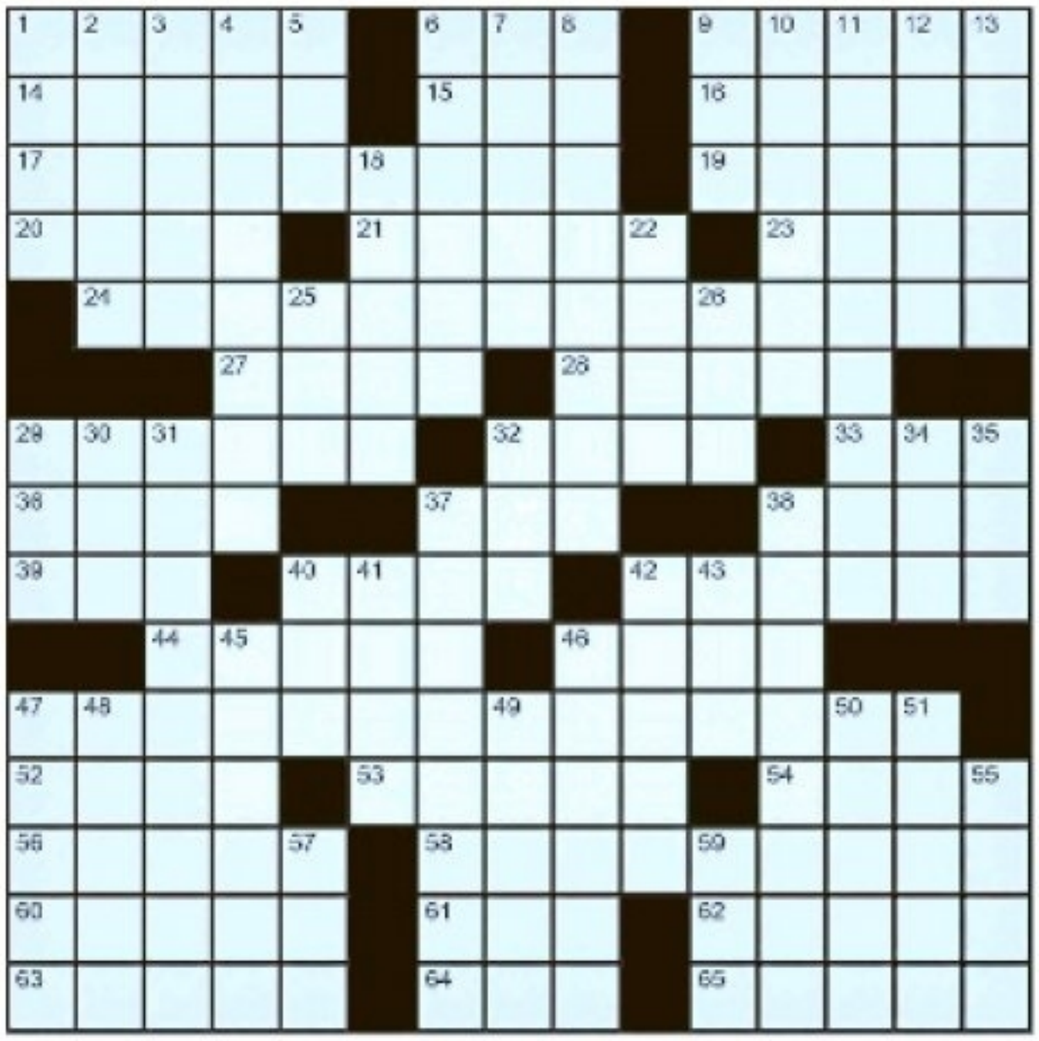
CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Renault 5 supermini, as it was also known: 2 wds.
6. 'Start With Trust' is this org.'s slogan
9. Willie of "Charles in Charge"
14. "It's __ to the finish!"
15. Swiss river, variantly
16. Letting-in-the-cold problem
17. Soup/salad/sandwich setting
19. Astrology sign
20. Lhasa __ (Small dog)
21. Open, as a cage
23. Eight: Spanish
24. Montreal-born "Shark Tank" star Kevin O'Leary recently became a candidate for the what in Canadian politics?: 2 wds.
27. Everly Brothers: "All I Have to __ Dream"
28. Expletive eliminator
29. Gain more sense: 2 wds.
32. Orbison and Rogers
33. Noun modifier, briefly
36. Listen
37. White tie suit, commonly
38. Between harbours
39. "Little __ lot?" (Quantity query)
40. "Dirty Jobs" host Mike
42. Coffee machine's daily change
44. Play the radio loudly
46. Release-from-jail money
47. Waterway between mainland Labrador and Newfoundland island: abbr. + wd. + wd. + wd.
52. Linked
53. Flight segment
54. Pub order
56. The end.
58. Super-small
60. Moved as molasses
61. Utmost degree
62. Someone sore
63. Fashion designer's creation
64. "__ whiz!"
65. Tractor company, John __

DOWN
1. "__ Land" (2016)
2. Spew as a volcano
3. Nova Scotia community near Chedabucto Bay
4. Granted via agreement
5. Showbiz practice run, briefly
6. 'B.' of US President Lyndon B. Johnson's name
7. "La __" by Ritchie Valens
8. Loaf storer
9. Dictionary abbr.
10. Song-like
11. Go by in the parade: 2 wds.
12. D-J link
13. Brownstone stairway
18. Spring flower
22. Be dependent
25. Toi: English
26. Home [abbr.]
29. UN wellness agency
30. Occupational suffix
31. Beach's refreshing wind: 2 wds.
32. Regret
34. Actor, Billy __ Williams
35. Jam container
37. President Trump's techie hobby
38. Seasoning in jerk chicken
40. Brit. fliers
41. Eyeballs
42. Figure in enchanted tales, olde-style
43. Sundial number
45. Family of Archie's comical friend Veronica
46. __ Spirit (Noel Coward play)
47. Rose to one's feet
48. Indian Ocean arm, __ Sea
49. Espresso style
50. Willowy
51. Participate
55. Pericles, Prince of __
57. Dates not as ancient as BCs
59. Edible no longer

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
Today, you have the advantage over all the other signs because the Moon is in your sign. This means you can ask the universe for a favour. (It also makes you more emotional than usual.)

Taurus April 21 - May 21
You will prefer to work alone or behind the scenes today, and that's just fine. You have been so high-viz lately that you need some privacy.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
You will enjoy schmoozing with others today, especially a female acquaintance. You might discuss future travel plans with someone, because you definitely need a change of scenery.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
Private details about your personal life might become public today for some reason. People are talking about you. Let's hope it's good stuff. (Fingers crossed.)

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Do something different today, because you are restless and in the mood for a bit of adventure. Obviously, if you can travel somewhere, this will please you.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Focus on red-tape details regarding inheritances, taxes, debt and shared property. Get information so that you can better handle disputes about these matters.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Because the Moon is opposite your sign today, this means you have to go more than halfway when dealing with others. In two weeks, when the Moon is in your own sign, you have the edge.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Do whatever you can to get better organized today, because this will please you. Tidy up messy areas both at home and at work.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
This is a playful, flirtatious day for you! Enjoy schmoozing with others. Sports events, fun activities with children and social outings will delight.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Home, family and your personal life are your top priorities today. A conversation with a female relative (Mom?) could be significant.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
When talking to others today, you want to get down to the nitty-gritty of things. You don't want superficial chitchat about the weather. You also want to express your feelings.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Money and financial issues are your concerns today. However, be careful if you are shopping, because you might shop according to your wishes, which really are not practical. Keep your receipts.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

1	6			9				5
			8		2			6
				3				
	5						4	
7		4				1		8
	2						3	
				8				
9			6		5			
3				1			8	9

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9	7	1	5	2	8	4	6	3
6	2	5	4	7	3	9	8	1
7	1	2	3	8	9	6	5	4
5	9	4	7	6	1	8	3	2
3	8	6	2	4	5	1	9	7
2	5	9	8	1	4	3	7	6
8	4	3	6	5	7	2	1	9
1	6	7	9	3	2	5	4	8

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